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## Ramapo halts tax exemption for proposed rabbinical college

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STAFF

POMONA - The property where a rabbinical college is proposed at routes 202 and 306 was back on the town tax roll yesterday.

Ramapo has rejected claims by the Congregation Rabbinical College of Tartikov that it was exempt from property taxes because it had tax-exempt status from the Internal Revenue Service.

There are inconsistencies in what they've filed previously and what was more recently provided to the town," Town Attorney Michael Klein said of information from Tartikov to the Assessor's Office.

So the assessor has denied the tax exemption."

Assessor Scott Shedler said the property carried an assessment of \$597,500, which meant that Tartikov could face a tax bill of about \$100,000 based on the new tax levies.

Shedler has said that state law allows municipalities to revisit tax-exempt status one year back. If the status were revoked, the organization also would have to pay about \$100,000 in back taxes. Tartikov bought the land in 2005 from Yeshiva of Spring Valley - which was exempt from property taxes - for \$13 million.

Klein said the town would wait for the outcome of Tartikov's appeal to Ramapo's Grievance Board. May 22 is the last day to file a grievance.

Documents originally filed by Tartikov indicated that the organization had tax-exempt status from the IRS.

Ramapo's file also includes a March 8 letter from Joseph Urban, an IRS manager of exempt organizations, in which he stated that Congregation Kahal Minchas Chinuch, the group that founded the college, "is not presently recognized by the IRS as a tax-exempt organization."

The IRS, though, did recognize the tax-exempt status of Kolel Beth Yechiel Mechil of Tartikov.

In the late 1990s, that organization, which is connected to the one that founded the college, had proposed building hundreds of homes in Staten Island for Hasidic residents of Brooklyn.

A document on file at the Pomona Village Clerk's Office - Shedler is also the village assessor - identified the owner of the property as Congregation Kahal Minchas Chinuch Inc. and affiliates."

In a March 28 written argument by one of the group's attorneys, Israel Vider of Brooklyn, Shedler was told that the organization wasn't required to file for tax-exempt status with the IRS because it was formed prior to Oct. 9, 1969.

Not-for-profit corporations organized after that date are required to make such filings.

It is therefore irrelevant whether or not the IRS has any record of recognizing" the congregation as a tax-exempt entity, Vider said.

Michael Tauber, a trustee of the proposed college and a Monsey real estate broker, said he was confident the group would regain its exemption from property taxes.

Tauber said the congregation planned to contact the IRS to be added to its federal tax-exempt listing.

"It will take a couple of months, but we can be on the list," Tauber said. "At the grievance, we'll supply all the documents that will show that we are an exempt organization."